



SHELTER, HOUSING, AND SETTLEMENTS

Background Information

The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has been a leader in the shelter and settlements sector in post-earthquake Haiti, both during the emergency response and in the longer-term reconstruction effort. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the Government of Haiti worked with USAID, the international community, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide emergency shelter to an estimated 1.5 million Haitians. As of December 2014, nearly all of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) had left temporary camps for alternative housing options. USAID, for its part, provided shelter solutions to more than 328,000 people through transitional shelters (t-shelters), repairs to damaged houses, support to host families who housed displaced people, and rental vouchers.

Key Challenges

The need for housing in Haiti is great, and rebuilding after one of the worst urban natural disasters in history will take time. Challenges to progress in the shelter sector include:

- **Lack of Available Stock:** The lack of adequate affordable housing has been a longstanding issue in Haiti; the destruction caused by the 2010 earthquake exacerbated the problem. According to Government of Haiti estimates, over the next 10 years, the Port-au-Prince region alone will require up to 500,000 additional housing units to make up for the pre-earthquake housing shortage, replace stock lost during the disaster, and accommodate the significant amount of expected urban growth.
- **Unclear Land Tenure:** According to Government of Haiti estimates, as much as 70 percent of Port-au-Prince's pre-quake population lived in informal settlements. In many cases, land tenure was governed by a range of informal arrangements involving renters and owners. This included multiple layers of ownership, where one person may have owned the land and another the building, while a third person rented living space. Identifying clear ownership is the crucial first step to rebuilding.
- **Lack of Governmental Capacity:** The Government of Haiti continues to rebuild after many of its most experienced civil servants were killed in the earthquake. In order to make lasting, sustainable changes, the Public Enterprise for the Promotion of Social Housing—the Haitian Government entity that oversees shelter—must increase its capacity to manage and implement shelter solutions.

U.S. Government Strategy: Improving Access to Finance, Building Government of Haiti Capacity

USAID's initial housing reconstruction strategy included efforts to develop new settlements to replace housing stock lost during the earthquake. In particular, the majority of USAID shelter funds were dedicated to construction of permanent homes on new settlement sites in the Cap-Haïtien and Port-au-Prince development corridors. This approach envisioned USAID and other donors funding 100 percent of the cost of construction for detached single-family homes on land provided by the Government of Haiti. After initial projects fell short of expectations, USAID recognized that this approach is not cost-effective and that the need far exceeds what all donor efforts could meet. Therefore, USAID is shifting away from new construction and putting a greater emphasis on providing low-income households with access to housing finance and better infrastructure, working in existing neighborhoods, and helping the private sector to play a more prominent role in housing construction.

To achieve greater cost efficiency and sustainability, new USAID shelter investments will focus on measures to broaden access to safe, low-cost housing by supporting increased access to financing.

- For example, in two existing neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince, USAID and international NGOs are helping homeowners identify financing for housing improvements, home expansions, and new housing construction. This pilot program works with financing institutions to develop lending instruments for these homeowners.
- Another initiative encourages greater investment by the private sector, including property developers and financing institutions, in expanding the overall housing stock, particularly for lower-income groups. USAID is also working through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the USAID Development Credit Authority to encourage financial institutions to develop new loan instruments for housing upgrades and mortgage loans.

To enhance sustainability, USAID is working to build the capacity of the Government of Haiti to manage the housing sector.

- For example, USAID is partnering with the Government of Haiti and an international NGO to formalize and improve new settlements that sprang up after the earthquake in areas that previously had been sparsely settled; these growing settlements now have several hundred thousand residents without adequate infrastructure, such as roads, water, or power.
- At the same time, USAID will continue to support the multi-stakeholder Haiti Property Law Working Group and reform efforts within the Government of Haiti to clarify and streamline the byzantine process for legally acquiring title to property.

Accomplishments

- USAID supported a \$1.9 million pilot program to map land tenure, house ownership, and demographic data for more than 10,000 plots in the Delmas 32 and Carrefour-Feuille neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince. This information has been used extensively by the World Bank and the Government of Haiti in their planning for reconstruction efforts in these communities. USAID is also actively participating in the Haiti Property Law Working Group, chaired by Habitat for Humanity.
- In December 2013, the U.S. Government, through USAID, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Haiti to assist with urban planning for informal post-earthquake communities and support owner-financed construction. As part of this MOU, USAID and the Government of Haiti will coordinate a jointly financed urban development pilot project in the informal settlement known as Canaan/Jerusalem. USAID will assist the Government of Haiti in preparing a single urban development plan and community engagement strategy for Canaan/Jerusalem; other support includes drainage works and the creation of public spaces, roads, and footpaths.
- Through the U.S. Government's \$65 million contribution to the Haiti Reconstruction Fund, USAID has supported neighborhood upgrades in Port-au-Prince, including house repairs and the construction of footpaths, drainage lines, retaining walls, and t-shelters, including innovative two-story t-shelters. USAID also upgraded and repaired key public and community facilities. So far, these activities have helped approximately 11,000 households to safely return to their pre-earthquake communities; 25,000 households have benefitted from community upgrades.
- Together with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), USAID is providing goods and services related to livelihoods and social cohesion to the 156 households at the USAID-funded settlement of Haut Damier, as well as approximately 350 households living in the pre-existing communities surrounding it. In Haut Damier, more than 100 residents have received skills training and 35 residents have established a women's association that processes fruit into income-producing products such as jellies and jams.
- USAID and OPIC, along with the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund, are supporting a mortgage-type program for housing micro-finance and construction loans for small business premises.
- USAID completed construction of 750 homes in Caracol EKAM and 156 in DLA 1.5, near Cap-Haïtien; all 906 houses are occupied. An additional 533 plots are prepared for housing at Caracol EKAM, with USAID working with private sector developers and financing institutions to construct houses on these plots.

- USAID is currently preparing plots in Terrier Rouge and Ouanaminthe in the north, on which the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) and the Government of Haiti's FAES Haiti (*Fonds d'Assistance Economique et Sociale*) are constructing 426 homes.
- USAID and the Qatar Haiti Fund have signed a collaborative agreement for an additional 148 homes near Port-au-Prince.